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Executive Registry

80-2609/1

2 December 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM :

SUBJECT : APEX - NSA Issue Paper

OS REGISTRY
FILE *See 18*

1. Attached is the LDX transmission from NSA in response to your call for issue papers on 1 December. In sum, Ms. Caracristi acknowledges that the NSA paper reiterates long-standing concerns they have expressed before. The paper states that NSA considers the APEX development to be bad for the security of COMINT, that APEX is expensive without commensurate benefits, that APEX does not provide equal protection for electronically transmitted information, that APEX ignores COMINT's

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2. In effect, the NSA issue paper recommends the APEX effort be started anew or abandoned. Initial comments follow and are keyed to NSA's numbered paragraphs:

1. Information Security

The COMINT Product compartment is no more specific than the present system, i.e., no change involved. The statement seems to assume that the documents protected by APEX COMINT will be available to enemies.

The APEX manuals were approved in October 1979 in draft by NFIB and again in the summer of '80 before release. The concept of APEX is to protect with compartmentation only that which is most sensitive. APEX, as such, is not believed to be in need of compartmented protection.

The comment about operating two systems during extended conversion is valid and has always been valid. Care must be exercised during conversion. The alternative, however, seems to be to go on as is forever.

2. Expense

The manpower costs, again, stem mostly from Executive Order 12065. You have indicated that some computer costs may be funded and Phase IV presumes maximum conversion in the process of other necessary work on the involved systems.

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3. Electronic Age

The comment on lack of added protection for electrically processed information is accurate. No one, however, could afford the document processing demanded by Executive Order 12065 for electricals which exceed 1,000 per day and as machine systems develop, they will increasingly be able to keep records. At any rate, APEX does no damage to existing processes except to require eventual conformance to APEX. No less accounting will occur.

4. Legal Implications

This paragraph continues the attempt to keep COMINT from DCI cognizance under Executive Order 12065. I see no grounds for accepting it.

5. SIGINT and the APEX Model

NSA continues to be concerned that SIGINT product is more sensitive than SIGINT collection programs per se and, therefore, continues to object to the APEX structure of OPERATIONAL and PRODUCT compartments.

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Attachment

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SA/DCI/ [redacted] (2 December 1980)

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